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China, Peoples Republic of

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First Official Announcement of H5N1 Avian Influenza in China

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Report Highlights:

Following the first official declaration of H5N1 avian influenza in China on Jan. 27, 2004, Chinese authorities from AQSIQ, MOA, the Ministry of Health, and other government offices are aggressively implementing monitoring and prevention measures to stem the disease spread and promote food safety. Avian influenza detections and suspected cases have spread to over 12 regions in China, but the disease has not officially occurred in the major poultry meat exporting areas. An unofficial translation of the government's announcements on avian influenza detections, a transcript from the MOA's February 4th briefing and information on the disease spread are included in this report.

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Executive Summary

On January 27, 2004, Chinese authorities officially reported, for the first time, detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (sub-type H5N1) in the southwestern Chinese province of Guangxi. The Chinese Ministry of Agriculture briefed a large international audience on February 4th and summarized China's avian influenza eradication measures. To date, detections or suspected cases of avian influenza are reported in 12 of China's 31 mainland provinces, municipalities or self-autonomous regions. The primary containment method is vaccination. Authorities are reportedly culling poultry within 3 kilometers of infected areas and vaccinating poultry within 5 to 8 kilometers of infected areas.

Official detections or suspected detections have not been reported in China's major poultry meat exporting areas, and only a minute percentage of China's poultry or fowl populations has been culled. China processes over eight billion birds a year. Thus, the 1.2 million birds culled thus far represent only five percent of a single day's normal slaughter rate in China (e.g., 22 million birds).

This report contains unofficial translations of the first two Chinese government announcements regarding avian influenza in China, the transcript from the official MOA briefing and a summary of the affected regions.

Translation of AQSIQ Announcement No. 49 reporting avian influenza in Guangxi and possible detections in Hubei and Hunan (1/27/04)**BEGIN TRANSLATION**

Special Report from the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ)

AQSIQ [2004] No. 49

To All Diplomatic Missions in China:

AQSIQ presents its compliments to all Diplomatic Missions in China and informs them of this afternoon's Ministry of Agriculture publication on the emergency epidemic situation of avian influenza in China.

According to the report, on January 27th the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory confirmed fowl that died in the town of Dingdang and Long'an counties of Guangxi Province was caused by sub-type highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1). On January 23rd, local veterinarians diagnosed the ducks that died on a farm in Dingdang from suspected H5N1. In the meantime, the local government immediately sent samples to the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory for virus isolation and identification. Meanwhile, according to the "Animal Epidemic Prevention Law of the People's Republic of China" relevant measures were taken and 14,000 fowl were culled within the 3 km radius of the outbreak origin and remaining fowl were vaccinated within a 5 km radius.

Additionally, on January 26th, a chicken farm in Wuxue city, Hubei province reported dead chickens and a duck farm in Wugang City, Hunan Province reported dead ducks. Local veterinarians diagnosed these two cases as suspected H5N1 and the local government began culling and vaccination measures while samples were sent to related organizations.

So far, the outbreak is under control and no humans have been infected.

Related departments of the State Council and local authorities are closely monitoring the outbreak. Measures have been taken to investigate the infection origin in order to prevent further spread. Also, fowl and poultry products from quarantine areas are prohibited from entering domestic and export markets. The Ministry of Agriculture has implemented plans for the prevention and control of the disease and will soon publish information on the outbreak monitoring.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health have informed the FAO and WHO of the outbreak and welcome them to participate in the exchange of information and cooperate in the prevention and control of avian influenza.

AQSIQ suspended the export of poultry meat and poultry products from Guangxi, Hubei and Hunan provinces and strengthened the supervision and inspection of production, processing and transportation of poultry meat in other provinces. AQSIQ continues monitoring the epidemic situation in related poultry farms to ensure the hygiene and safety of export poultry products for export.

Natural geographical barriers such as mountains and rivers and the prevention and control system established by the Inspection and Quarantine organizations at all levels ranging from county, district, province and central government are working jointly to impose stringent inspection and quarantine measures on all animals and animals products in all areas and transportation through railways, highways, waterways and air.

After the outbreak in the above-mentioned provinces, the Chinese government took measures to cull, control, and prevent the infection according to "China Animal Epidemic Prevention Law" so that the disease could be controlled and eliminated in the isolated areas. Therefore, we hope your government would abide by OIE regionalized principles and take regionalized policy towards China poultry and its products, not to suspend the import of poultry meat from provinces other than the above mentioned three provinces, particularly not to ban the import of cooked poultry meat which does not contain any risk. On the basis of strengthening the supervision of related poultry meat processing business procedures, we are willing to issue certification for processed products whose core temperature can be guaranteed to exceed 70 degrees Celsius for at least 1 minute by adding the following clause to the original certificate: 'this shipment has gone through heat processing, the core of the meat products has attained a temperature higher than 70 degrees Celsius for longer than 1 minute.'

Please forward the above information to all appropriate departments in your country. We hope your government can accept our suggestions on the basis of science and practicality, as well as the WTO/SPS minimal impact on trade principles. We are willing to cooperate closely with the related organizations in your country, to strengthen the exchange of information and communication, to monitor the epidemic situation, and to provide relevant information anytime.

AQSIQ
Jan. 27 2004

END TRANSLATION

Translation of AQSIQ announcement confirming sub-type H5N1 detection and additional suspected disease incidents (1/30/04)

BEGIN TRANSLATION

To All Diplomatic Missions:

We now report the updated epidemic situation of avian influenza in China:

1. Today, MOA received an identification report from the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory. It has been confirmed that the suspected case of avian influenza, which occurred in Wuqiu city of Hubei and Wugan city of Hunan, is Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) (H5N1 sub-type).
2. Additionally reported: Recently in Guangde county and Yushan district of Maanshan city of Anhui province, Nanhui district of Shanghai, and Jiedong county and about 4 subsequent places in Guangdong province some HPAI likely occurred.

China will officially report the above epidemic situation through the news media today at 7:00 pm.

Import and Export Food Safety Department
AQSIQ
Jan. 30, 2004

END TRANSLATION

Transcript of Ministry of Agriculture Minister Du's statement entitled *Information on the Control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in China (2/4/04)*

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good Afternoon. First of all, I would like to thank the diplomatic envoys of all countries to China and the international organizations in China for their care for and support to the development of China's agriculture and rural economy. And I would also like to thank you for your interest in HPAI in China and its prevention and control.

Now I will give you some information on the current HPAI situation in China.

I. HPAI in China

Up to now, there are altogether 21 cases of the disease in 12 provinces (autonomous regions or municipalities), in which 4 have been confirmed by the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory as subtype H5N1-caused HPAI, the rest 17 being suspected cases. The accumulated number of diseased birds is 56,010, out of which 49,029 have died. In accordance with the Law on Animal Epidemic Prevention, the local governments in the above-mentioned places have sealed off the infected areas, culled all the poultry in 3 km around the infected spots, and imposed compulsory vaccination on the poultry in 5 km around the infected spots. Up till now, culled poultry totals 1,209,073 while those that have received compulsory vaccination numbers 2,811,299.

At present, the disease in the above-said places is under control and no case of transmission to human beings has been found.

II. Prevention and Control Measures Taken by the Government of China

After the discovery of HPAI in some places of our country, the Central Government has attached great importance to the outbreak. President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao have made important instructions on many occasions, stressing the importance of relying on science, rule of laws and participatory approach in containing the poultry disease.

On January 29th, Premier Wen Jiabao chaired the 37th Executive Meeting of the State Council, working out the program on prevention and control of HPAI. The Meeting indicated that the various localities and departments concerned should intensify the leadership, carry out close cooperation, rely on science, conduct prevention and control work by law with public participatory and decisive decision-making while basing on the important principles of "Three Represents" and in line with The Law on Animal Epidemic Prevention of the People's Republic of China. We should be highly responsible for the public while implementing the various control measures. The meeting also decided that the priority should be placed on the implementing of 8 measures for HPAI control. The measures include as follows; first, the places where bird flu has been found, should release disease information timely and accurately in line with the requirements. In accordance with the requirements of control work, measures such as stamping out, thorough disinfection, tight isolation and compulsory immunization have been carried out with the aim of preventing the disease from spreading further. Second, the places where no bird flu has been found should lose no time to carry out the various disease prevention and control work and at the same time to improve the emergency plan. The priority shall be placed on the prevention and control for key areas, large-scale animal raising farms and households. Efforts should be made to intensify the

disease surveillance and adopt effective measures in order to prevent the occurrence of the disease. Third, fund shall be allocated for AI control and policy be made for compensation package. In the infected areas, the fanners whose poultry are culled should be compensated accordingly. The compulsory immunization is free of charge so that the fanners need no worry about financial resources. The cost in culling operation and compulsory immunization shall be covered by the central and local governments. Fourth, scientific research is to be enhanced. Breakthroughs will be made in HPAI virus and its prevention and control. Efforts shall be focused on vaccine production and reserves as well as international cooperation in HPAI control. Fifth, inspection and quarantine are to be strengthened on imported and exported poultry and poultry products so as to prevent the disease from spreading. Smuggling of poultry and its products must be cracked down. Strict administration is needed for disease surveillance in local markets. Sixth, publicity and education is necessary for the public to understand transmission, prevention and control of HPAI. Seventh, human infection must be avoided. In this regard, the priorities are monitoring and AI prevention in the infected areas and on high-risk population. Eighth, respond system is developed for sudden outbreak of major animal diseases. While improving the surveillance networks for epidemic situation and the quarantine system, greater efforts shall be put in animal disease control in terms of infrastructure construction and capacity building for local professionals.

On January 30, the State Council established the National Avian Influenza Prevention Headquarters. Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu was appointed director-general of the headquarters, and State Councilor and State Council Secretary General (concurrently) Hua Jianmin was appointed deputy director-general. The headquarters consists of the State Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, State Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, State Administration for Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Commerce and General Administration of Customs. The Headquarters office is located in the Ministry of Agriculture, responsible for national bird flu control affairs.

On February 4, the State Council convened Working Meeting on National Bird Flu Prevention, guiding national efforts on the HPAI control.

The Ministry of Agriculture and other ministries adopted a series of measures according to relevant laws and regulations and following state leaders' directives. These measures include: 1) close surveillance on national epidemic situation and implementing epidemic reporting system, and 2) prompt mass culling measures and checking measures. Governments at all levels are required to analyze disease outbreak immediately, if any, and formulate disease control and stamping-out schemes. All the poultry in the affected area or within 3 kilometers around the affected area are killed. All the poultry within 5 kilometers around the affected area are vaccinated on a compulsory basis. Control measures also include: 3) organizing urgent production and storage of vaccines, with better coordination and other efforts to ensure the vaccine supply and vaccine quality, and 4) giving better guidance and supervision to epidemic prevention at all levels. The Ministry of Agriculture has sent dozens of supervision teams to guide epidemic prevention in the field and monitor enforcement of all prevention measures.

Departments concerned and relevant local governments are taking close monitoring of the development of bird flu, making investigations of pathogenic sources in order to strictly prevent spread of the infectious disease, and take stringent control of exporting poultry from the infected areas to other parts of the world, and importing into domestic markets.

In the future, MOA and departments concerned will continue reporting to FAO, WHO and countries concerned. We welcome countries concerned, especially our neighboring countries and relevant international organizations have exchange and cooperation with China on prevention and control of bird flu.

We believe, with joint efforts made by countries concerned and support from relevant international organizations, we are certain to win the fight against the existing Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and usher in a bright tomorrow.

Thank you.

END TRANSCRIPT

Regional list of Avian Influenza sub-type H5N1 detections or suspected detention areas as of February 3, 2004, including brief description of measures taken**Anhui**

Suspected detection in Guangde County and Ma'anshan on discovery date of Jan. 30, 2004. Additional suspected detections in Fuyang and Jieshou cities on discovery date of Feb. 3, 2004.

Gansu

Suspected detection in Lanzhou City and Jingyuan County on discovery date of Feb. 3, 2004. Additional suspected detection Gaolan County on discovery date of Feb. 4, 2004.

Guangdong

Detection in Chao'an County and suspected detection in Jiedong County on discovery dates of Jan. 31, 2004 and Jan. 30, 2004.

Guangxi

Detection in Long'an County on discovery date of Jan. 23, 2004. News reports indicate 14,000 fowl culled following the detection.

Henan

Suspected detection in Pingyu County on discovery date of Feb. 1, 2004.

Hubei

Detection in Wuxue on discovery date of Jan. 26, 2004 and in Yichang on discovery date of Feb. 1, 2004. News reports indicate 70,000 chicken culled following detection. Additional suspected detection in Xiangfan on discovery date of Feb. 3, 2004.

Hunan

Detection in Wugang on discovery date of Jan. 26, 2004. News reports indicate 44,000 fowl culled following the detection. Additional suspected detection in Pingjiang County on discovery date of Feb. 3, 2004.

Shanghai

Suspected detection in Nanhui District on discovery date of Jan. 30, 2004.

Shaanxi

Suspected detection in Xian City on discovery date of Feb. 3, 2004.

Xinjiang

Suspected detection in area operated by Xinjiang Production and Construction Group on discovery date of Feb. 1, 2004.

Yunnan

Suspected detection in area of Chenggong County on discovery date of Feb. 1, 2004 that was changed to a confirmed detection on Feb. 4, 2004. An additional suspected detection made in Guangdu District of Kunming on discovery date of Feb. 4, 2004.

Zhejiang

Suspected detection in area of Yongkang on discovery date of Feb. 1, 2004.